

## Testimony In Support of House Bill 4265 and 4266

I would like to thank you for the chance to provide testimony on these bills from the prospective of someone who is in business of composting.

My name is Jim Glas. I'm the owner of Kalamazoo Landscape Supplies and have been in the soils and growing media business for 42 years. 33 years ago, after our peat supply ran out, we began using compost as an organic soil amendment. I'm also the owner of Renewed Earth, a commercial composting business.

I'm very much in favor of the recycling and reuse of our resources when they have a safe and beneficial use. I share similar sentiments as Karen O'Brian from the Composters Council, and Dr John Bierbalm from MSU. Current growing techniques are taking more organic materials from the soils then are being replaced. What I wish would happen is not the same as what does happen in the market place.

Mixed yard waste compost quality is not consistent. If you cannot control the inputs you cannot control the outputs. 12 years ago I was using leaf compost from the City of Grand Rapids to amend topsoil and sold 400 cubic yards to a beautiful home in Ada. We screen our soils to 5/8" minus. The homeowner's 3-year-old son found this syringe part of a hypodermic needle in the soil. By the time I got to his house he also found these pieces of glass. I could not assure him that the missing needle was not in the soil nor guarantee there wasn't any other broken glass. We removed 400 cubic yards of topsoil and brought in 400 cubic yards of virgin topsoil. We guess the origin of the syringe was off the street at leaf collection time. We own and use a trommel screen, magnets on conveyors, a star screen, a finger screen, a harp screen, a chip screen and an air knife. We also remove by hand any visible contaminants. I still cannot guarantee dangerous litter does not end up in the final product.

Dow Chemical came out with a "safe" broadleaf killer to be used on turf called Imprelis. The focus of safety was the toxicity to mammals and still an affective herbicide. The heat generated in properly managed compost piles kill pathogens, weed seeds and breaks down herbicides but not Imprelis. It needs long exposure to oxygen, which does exist in a poorly managed compost piles. Unfortunately, under very wet conditions Imprelis leeches and also kills off Norway spruce and White Pine. We need other options than composting for these types of chemicals.

In Kalamazoo County there are 4 registered Composting Facilities. I know of 10 others in the county that should be and only 1 that complies completely with the state regulations. MDEQ has one person dealing with registering Compost Sites and does not have enough travel budget to leave Lansing unless it's urgent!